

## Mirrors and Awareness

**Flat Mirrors**-Don't distort the picture (Interior Mirror)

**Convex Mirrors**- Slightly curved with a wider field of vision. A vehicle behind seems smaller and further away than it is (Side Mirrors)

Mirrors are one of the keys of defensive driving. Using mirrors regularly and sensibly is vital to good driving. The function of mirrors are:

- Give you a view of the road behind and the sides
- Enable you to keep up to date with what's happening behind and to the sides of your vehicle
- Help you to make safe and sensible decisions, based on the position of speed and traffic.

### Which Mirror to use:

Your use of mirrors should be linked to the manoeuvre you intend to make and the type of vehicle you are driving. Normally you should use your interior mirror first, followed by the exterior ones if necessary.

When you look in the mirrors, ask yourself:

- How close is the traffic behind you?
- How fast is it moving?
- What's it doing?
- Is the manoeuvre safe?
- How will my signal affect the following drivers?

### When to use the mirrors:

You should always use the mirrors in good time, that is, well before you start:

- Moving off
- Signalling
- Changing direction or lane, turning left, right or overtaking
- Slowing down or stopping
- Opening car doors
- Approaching a hazard such as bends in the road, junctions, pedestrian crossings, roadworks, livestock's e.t.c

## **Blind Spots:**

A blind spot is an area that can't be seen either when using normal forward vision or when using mirrors. The main blind spots are:

- The area between what you see looking forward and what you see in your exterior mirror
- The area obscured by the bodywork of the vehicle when you look in the mirrors. Vehicles of different shapes have different blind spots

On occasion it will be necessary to check blind spots whilst on the move. These blind spots will be to either side and shouldn't require you to look round, but rather to give a quick sideways glance. Looking right around to check blind spots on the move is unnecessary and dangerous, especially when driving at high speeds.

Regular and sensible use of the mirrors will keep you up to date with what's happening behind.

### **When to check blind spots:**

- Before changing lanes
- Before joining a motorway or dual carriageway from a slip road
- Before manoeuvring in situations where traffic is merging from the left or right
- Before opening car doors

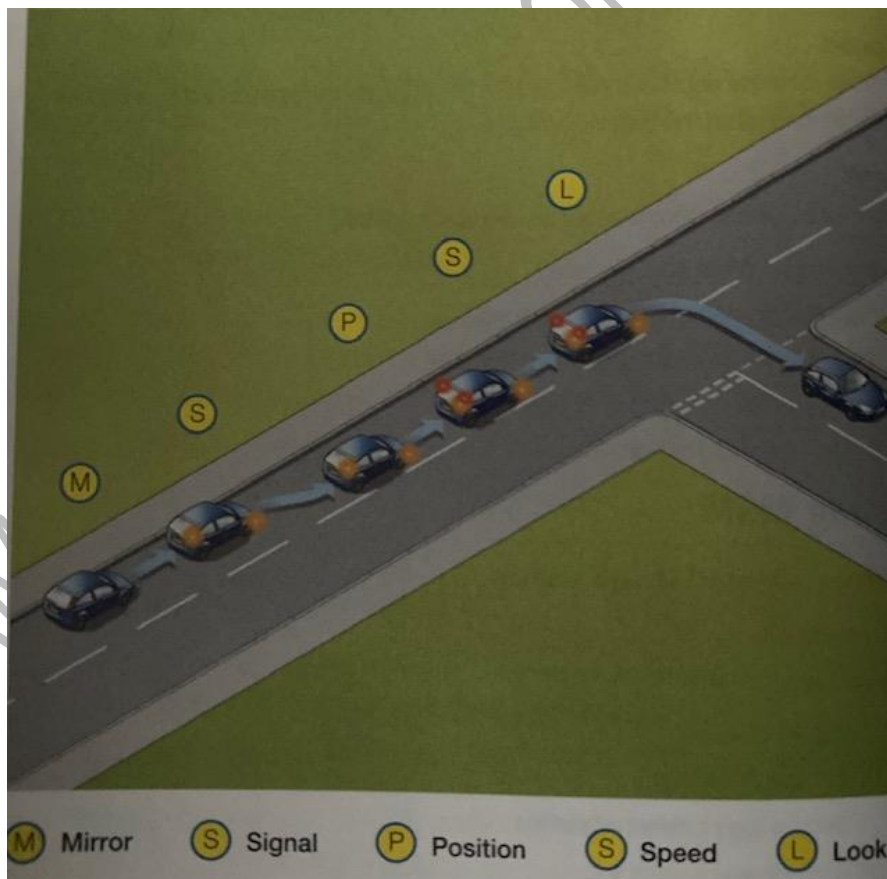
## MSM Routine

- **Mirrors**- Check the speed and position of traffic behind you
- **Signal**- Consider whether a signal is necessary. If it is, signal your intention to change course or slow down in good time
- **Manoeuvre**- A manoeuvre is a change of speed or direction

A manoeuvre is broken down further into **PSL**:

- **P- Position**- The vehicle must be in the correct position for the manoeuvre. When a change of direction is required, move into the position in good time
- **S-Speed**- Ensure the vehicle is travelling at the appropriate speed and gear
- **L-Look**: What can you see? What are your options? Either continue or wait?

To simplify this, you can use **MSPSL**: Mirror, Signal, Position, Speed, Look



You should use this routine when:

- Moving off
- Signalling
- Changing direction or lane, turning left, right or overtaking
- Slowing down or stopping

**Tips:**

- Embed MSPSL in your day-to-day driving
- Never signal without checking mirrors first
- Rely solely on mirrors when you're reversing. Keep looking around for other road users
- Assume that because you signalled it's safe to carry out the manoeuvre. Check to be sure other users have seen your signal and understand your intention.